
OLR Bill Analysis**HB 6596*****AN ACT CONCERNING POLICE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill complies with the federal Social Security Act's (SSA § 218(d)(2)) requirements for extending Medicare coverage to members of municipal police and fire departments who (1) became municipal employees before April 1, 1986, and (2) have been continuously working since March 31 of that year or earlier as police officers or firefighters in positions covered by a public retirement system. Consistent with the SSA, the bill requires the governor to authorize a coverage referendum of affected employees upon request of the municipality's legislative body.

The bill specifies that the referendum question be:

Whether service of individuals in policemen's or firemen's positions covered by a retirement system established by the state or a municipality who have been in continuous employment with a municipality since prior to April 1, 1986 should be excluded from or included under an agreement under sections 7-452 to 7-455, inclusive for purposes of health insurance coverage under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (Medicare).

CGS §§ 7-452 to 7-455 refer to the state law governing Medicare coverage agreements.

The referendum must be supervised by the State Retirement Commission, which has similar responsibilities for other referenda.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Medicare Coverage for Municipal Police and Firefighters

In most cases, Medicare coverage is available for municipal police and firefighters hired after March 31, 1986. But those hired earlier are eligible only by agreement among the state, municipality, and Social Security Administration. To obtain federal approval, a majority of affected employees must have voted in favor of coverage at a state-supervised referendum expressly authorized by state law.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24 Nay 0 (03/21/2013)